

Assemblymember Christine Kehoe Brings You News from Sacramento

Aug 26, 2002

Budget Update

Democrats support a balanced approach of spending cuts and tax increases as the only reasonable solution. This budget debate is a tradeoff between cuts and tax increases and when forced to choose between cutting health care, education and public safety programs against increasing the tax on cigarettes, the choice is clear. Republicans oppose all new tax increases, which means we would have to severely cut health care for seniors and the poor, reduce funding to local governments for police and fire services, and cut funds to public schools by \$1.5 billion to achieve a balanced budget. Our task at the Capitol is to see that, as much as possible, those Californians who need state services are protected. At the same time we must support our schools, vital safety services, and public health. It's time to get back to the job Californians sent us here to do.

Renewable energy could aid energy crisis

A year after rolling blackouts hit California, our energy problems are far from over. Our dependence on fossil fuels may lead to future price spikes and blackouts, and it harms our health and environment. However, there are solutions: increasing our use of renewable energy would go a long way toward easing our dependence on volatile, polluting fossil fuels.

Senator Byron Sher (D-Los Angeles) has introduced bills aimed at increasing the use of renewable energy. SB 1078 will establish a "Renewables Portfolio Standard" in California and ensure that by the year 2015, 20 percent of California's energy is produced from clean energy like wind, solar and geothermal sources. Another bill, SB 1524, establishes a schedule to increase this amount of renewable energy in the electricity mix. Each electric utility would be required to increase the amount of renewable energy in their portfolios by at least 1 percent per year until they reach 20 percent.

These bills contain cost caps that protect consumers from any rate hikes due to the cost of renewable power. Under the bills as written, the Public Utilities Commission establishes a benchmark price for renewable contracts, which will be the cost of a comparable gas-fired power contract. If retail sellers need to purchase renewables contracts that are more expensive than the benchmark price, the extra costs are covered by the Public Goods Fund, money already allocated to renewable energy producers.

To read the bills go to <http://www.sen.ca.gov/> and search for SB 1078 or SB 1524 in "Legislation".

Reproductive Privacy Act makes progress

Senate Bill 1301 (Kuehl) passed the Assembly last Monday by a vote of 44-23. Senate Bill 1301 establishes the Reproductive Privacy Act and clarifies important parameters for California's reproductive laws.

Since the 1820s there have been various laws proposed or adopted in the United States to restrict or prohibit a woman's right to choose. In 1973, those laws were found by the highest court in the land to be unconstitutional. Yet nearly thirty years later, some of those laws are surprisingly still on the books.

A woman's right to choose is still not abundantly clear in many parts of the law. This is why I am proud to join Senator Kuehl as a co-author of SB 1301 which will create 'a contemporary law' to clearly protect a woman's right to reproductive freedom. SB 1301 repeals those unconstitutional laws and clearly provides for a woman's right to choose. SB 1301 is on the Governor's desk waiting for his signature.

To read the bill go to <http://www.sen.ca.gov/> and search for SB 1301 in "Legislation".

Protecting homeowners

A few months ago I wrote about legislation authored to protect homeowners. My bill continues to make its way through the legislative process, gaining attention and support. AB 2289 would require a 30-day notice to homeowners before a homeowner association records a lien against the homeowner's property. It would also require the homeowner and the association to meet regarding any alleged delinquency in assessments.

In a recent *San Diego Union Tribune* op-ed, "Buying an affordable home – and keeping it", Bill Powers, legislative director of the Congress of California Seniors, wrote, "Given the affordable housing crisis in California, and San Diego County, we believe this approach is fair to both homeowners and associations... Both Republicans and Democrats in

the Legislature support our effort to protect homeowners... San Diego homeowners deserve to see AB 2289 become a law."

To read the article in its entirety, go to <http://pqasb.pqarchiver.com/sandiego-sub/index.html?ts=1030125468&classchk=pass>. (Access to the *Union Tribune* archives requires a username and password. If you're you don't have those, register to access the archives.)

It's time to go back to school

Come on, America – it's time to go back to school and pitch in and help teach our kids. Students today face a future of expanded opportunities and broadened horizons. They also face the pressures of going to college, a fluctuating economy, and a job market characterized by ever-changing technology, growing international competition, and the effort of learning in an ever more complex society.

We can prepare our students for the future by acting *now* on what we know. Thirty years of research show that when children can count on family, friends, and community involvement in their schooling, it makes a significant difference in their learning. The "America Goes Back to School Program", founded in 1995 under the Clinton Administration, was created to promote involvement of parents in their children's education.

The "America Goes Back to School" Program is based on several key facts, including the following:

- Students who have one or both parents involved in their education are more likely to get A's and less likely to be suspended, expelled or forced to repeat a grade;
- A father's involvement appears to be especially significant in a child receiving A's;
- Teachers say the single most important thing public schools need to help students learn is involved parents;
- Almost *half* of all Americans say they would be very comfortable volunteering to be a mentor or to help in some way at a local school, but only *one-third* of Americans say they regularly participate in volunteer groups that do charity work or community service; and
- Over 60 percent of Americans believe that most parents face times when they need help raising their kids, often because they are so stretched at home.

For more information on how you can become more involved in your child's education, go to <http://www.smarterkids.com/rescenter/library/articles.asp?article=961>.

Upcoming Town Hall Meetings

In September and October I'll be hosting a series of Town Hall Meetings on a wide-range of state-related programs – and I hope you'll join me.

"Making College Affordable" – September 25, 5:30-7:00 p.m., Taft Middle School auditorium, 9191 Gramercy Drive. Meet with education representatives to hear how you can make college affordable for your children, apply for scholarships, and invest in the California Golden State ScholarShare College Savings Trust Fund Program.

"Protecting your Privacy" – October 9, 5:30-7:00 p.m., Joyce Beers Community Center, 1230 Cleveland Ave. Meet with representatives to learn how to protect your privacy and personal information. Learn how to protect your credit report, financial information and how to safeguard yourself against identity theft.

"Senior Health Care" – October 10, 12:45 – 2:00 p.m., College Avenue Senior Center, 4855 College Ave. Opportunities to discuss HMOs, Medi-Cal, Health Care Financing, drug costs, health insurance and services.

To RSVP, or for more information, contact me at Assemblymember.Kehoe@assembly.ca.gov.

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I have a variety of free brochures available to you. Email me at Assemblymember.Kehoe@assembly.ca.gov to get a listing of our brochures and have some sent to you.